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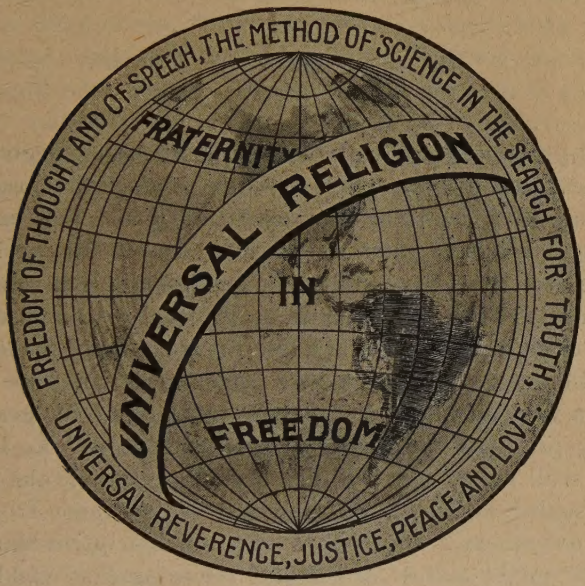

CONTENTS

Reports read at the Tenth Annual Meeting of the First Free Church of Tacoma.

Annual Report of the Seattle Society for Universal Religion.

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

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REPORTS READ AT THE TENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FIRST FREE CHURCH OF TACOMA, JANUARY 12, 1903.*

Report of Alfred W. Martin.

In presenting my tenth annual report, let me begin with the statement that the year 1902 proved to be much the busiest of the ten years that cover my ministry among you. This exceptional activity I attribute, first, to the extension of my work for the Seattle Society, and, second, to the execution of plans for the successful celebration of our tenth anniversary—a many-sided task begun last April and finished last Friday. Just here let me put myself on record as saying that never in my life have I undertaken a work in which there was so much cause for grateful joy and so little for disheartening disappointment. As long as I live I shall remember with pleasure and gratitude the generous, whole-souled and patriotic responses which came from nearly every one whom I approached with a subscription-blank. Any minister might well be proud of a following that could produce $3,458.52 to clear off a debt of $2,500 and celebrate its tenth anniversary by such lay addresses as were heard at the Tacoma hotel on the evening of December second.

It is good to see a representative from the Seattle society at this sociable and to remember that three delegates were present last year and that when our friends on Elliott bay celebrated their third annual festival we were represented by three delegates with Mr. F. W. Low as their spokesman. Let us aim at maintaining and developing this goodly fellowship between the two societies, especially since transportation facilities have been increased and the distance between the two cities shortened.

*Most of the reports have been condensed owing to the space limit of our monthly.—Ed.

Perhaps the most important move made by our society since its inauguration was the conversion of our church building into "The Tacoma Music hall," and the conducting of our Sunday services, since November 3, 1901, at the Tacoma theater. In my ninth annual report I stated the immediate reasons for this innovation. They were, first, that the seating capacity of our church auditorium often proved too small to accommodate all the would-be attendants; and, second, the belief that a downtown Sunday service would reach many who could not be attracted to a church edifice, no matter how free from ecclesiastical appointments its architecture might be or how free from dogmatism and cant the religion preached within its walls. Most gratifying it is to be able to say that thus far we have had no occasion to regret this radical change instituted over a year ago. On the contrary, both financially and spiritually, the move has proved a most satisfactory and encouraging one. The statement of Treasurer Reid I am sure surprised many of you, but it should be supplemented with the remark his modesty forbade him to make, that the financial success of the Tacoma Music hall is largely due to his untiring and persistent effort, inspired by a deeply-rooted love for our cause.

What we expected would occur at the Tacoma theater on Sunday mornings has actually happened. Not only has the attendance been considerably larger than formerly, but what is greatly significant, large numbers of men have been drawn to our services who never were seen at our meetings before. The experiment of holding evening instead of morning services for the five Sundays in June resulted in nearly doubling the attendance, and were it not that the theater bookings prevented it, evening services would have been resumed in October.

There are on our membership roll today 565 names, an increase of exactly 500 in ten years, for we started our Free church with a charter membership of sixty-five. Twenty-six new members were added in 1902 and nine former residents have returned to us. Three of our members withdrew their names last year, and, be it said, not for any shallow or silly reason, as has sometimes been the case, but because they ceased to believe in the

principles of our movement and preferred to ally themselves with an occult form of Christianity.

To the list of our honored dead we have been called to add seven names more:

Mr. R. S. Caldwell, who, during the few years of his connection with the society, was a most enthusiastic and faithful member.

Mr. Frederick McCoy, a young man of great moral earnestness and one of our most regular attendants at the Sunday services.

Mrs. A. H. Garretson, lovingly remembered for her benevolent activity on all occasions when the call for philanthropy came to her.

Miss Hortense Shenkenberg, but 21 years of age at the time of her death, yet singularly mature, a valued teacher in our Sunday school and co-operator in many another good work.

Mrs. I. A. Sternberg, gratefully remembered by us all for the pleasure so often derived from her freely given talent.

Mr. G. W Plummer, ever on the alert to promote the welfare of our church, a member filled with missionary zeal and instrumental in bringing our cause to the notice of many who might otherwise never have known of it.

Mr. H. A. Pitman, one of the newer members of our society and not known to many of you, but a genuine and devoted friend of our movement.

Very gratifying indeed it is to realize that our two Free churches contain so many men who can render adequate and acceptable service on a Sunday when I am obliged to be out of town. I had the pleasure of testing this truth last spring when absent for seven weeks on a lecturing tour to increase our tenth anniversary fund. At that time three of the Sunday meetings were conducted by laymen. Mr. John Arthur spoke on "The Modern Poets as Apostles of Liberalism;" Mr. John W. Pratt on "The Historical Basis of Jesus," and Mr. F. D. Nash on "Culture and Morals." And now I have my eye on three other laymen to press into similar service when occasion shall call for

it. Twice during this term of absence the congregation heard Rabbi Joseph, of Seattle, and once Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, of Portland, officiated. In this connection let me say that I have already spoken twice in Rabbi Joseph's temple at the Sabbath services on Friday evening and next month I expect to preach for Rabbi Wise and to lecture before one of the organizations connected with his church. Surely the dream of a universal religious fellowship is anything but cheerless and seems near at hand when such friendly relations can be inaugurated and maintained.

Besides the regular Sunday services here and at Seattle and occasional week-day addresses in both cities, I delivered during the past year a series of six stereopticon lectures on "Italy" for the benefit of the Fortnightly Club, and four informal lecture-talks with stereopticon views to the Old Town Boys' club, so successfully conducted by Mr. Harvey Johnson. During the year eight marriages were solemnized and sixteen funerals conducted. The editing of our monthly paper, Universal Religion, the writing out of a discourse each month, together with editorial articles and notes, has been accomplished as heretofore, but again I must register my plea for more support, for more subscribers to this organ of our movement. To be sure, the paper is on a self-supporting basis and each year there is a balance in the treasury, but there are at least thirty more families in our church who are not down on the list of subscribers. To Mr. Samuel Collyer, who has the entire business and publishing department in his charge, we owe genuine appreciation of his services. With unflagging fidelity has he fulfilled the duties of his office for the ten years since the first number of our organ appeared, and we hope he will have no occasion to relinquish his post.

As treasurer of the publication fund, I have to report receipts amounting to $166.55, and disbursements (for printing and postage chiefly), $131.75, leaving a balance in the bank of $34.80. Three new "tracts" were added to the series, No. 15, by myself, "What Is a Free Church;" No. 16, by Dr. Abbot, "What Is Free Religion," of which 300 copies have been circulated. No. 17, "The Story of a Memorable Petition," was mailed

to nearly 300 Unitarian ministers and some 600 copies were distributed locally.

The production by Miss F. L. Abbot of a catechism of our faith made the formation of an adult class for the study of this book desirable, and while attempts at organizing such a class have thus far failed—and for good reasons—a new beginning is to be made here next Monday evening, and I expect to conduct fortnightly sessions until June, inviting all who are interested in this important study to join the class.

As a means of bringing the various organizations of our society into closer touch for the furtherance of its purposes, there was organized last May an advisory council of "twenty-five" to hold monthly meetings, to make recommendations to the board of trustees, to initiate and execute plans for the advancement of our cause, and to promote mutual acquaintance and fellowship. A special report on this council has been already presented and I need not expatiate upon it further, except to urge on those composing it the importance of regular attendance and concerted effort. Never, as a society, were we in such good condition for propagating the cause in which we believe. Let us remember that freedom from hampering debt means freedom to do grand and aggressive work, and now that we are free from financial embarrassment, let us resolve to rise, as never before, to the dignity of our high calling and make this dearly beloved church of ours more and more a power for good, both unto ourselves, individually, to the community and to the world.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER, R. T. REID.

At the beginning of the year the society had a floating debt of $580.02, with $179.99 in its treasury. From a carefully prepared estimate of our revenue and expenses for the ensuing year it appeared that at its close we would have a deficit amounting to $1,056.18. With a view of providing for this large deficit, the various organizations connected with our movement have worked unceasingly throughout the year, the grand result of their efforts being that, notwithstanding the fact that our expenditures exceeded our estimate by nearly $900.00, owing to

extensive repairs made to the building and the purchase of furniture, etc., we enter upon the new year absolutely free of floating debt and with a balance of $1.34 in our treasury. In addition to this very gratifying statement, I have to inform you that with a part of the proceeds of our tenth anniversary celebration $2,500.00 of our mortgage debt has been liquidated and an extension of time for paying off the remainder arranged under which we have the privilege of paying all or part of the amount at any time during the next five years in sums of $500.00 or over. Twice during the year your trustees have been obliged to request the members and friends of the society to make an additional contribution, the appeal in each instance meeting with a generous response, the proceeds of the two subscription papers amounting to $483.35. While this result was most satisfactory, and while the small balance left in our treasury at the end of the year indicates the wisdom of making the appeal for additional subscriptions, I feel that every member of our society will join the board of trustees in the hope that the necessity may never again arise, supplementing the hope with a resolution to do everything in their power to assist in the provision of the funds required, by influencing their friends to become subscribers for sittings at our morning services and in such other ways as may from time to time be suggested.

A little over a year ago the thought occurred to Mr. Martin that there was need in the city of a small hall that might be used for lectures, social gatherings, dancing parties, etc. His suggestion that our church building be converted into such a hall met with the prompt approval of the board of trustees, and arrangements were accordingly made for making the needed changes and the "Tacoma Music Hall" was formally opened on January 24 by a house-warming party given by the Fortnightly club. Since then the hall has been growing in popularity, having yielded a revenue of $631.00 during the year, the income for November alone being $132.50. With improvements costing about a thousand dollars I believe we can safely depend on a net revenue from the building of from seven hundred to a thousand dollars per annum.

THE WOMAN'S UNION.

MRS. GEORGE B. FRYE, PRESIDENT.

The first work of the year 1902 was making articles for an Easter sale, successfully held here last March. About the middle of last May we engaged Rev. L. W. Sprague, of Helena, Montana, to deliver his illustrated lecture on the Yellowstone Park. During the summer vacation our ladies were busy preparing for a Christmas sale the first week in December, the receipts from which amounted to $535.25. Add to this the receipt of $60.00 from membership dues and the income derived from various undertakings during the year and our total receipts aggregate for 1902 the sum of $771.70. Subtracting disbursements to the amount of $724.37 leaves a balance of $47.33 with which to enter 1903. Of the different branches of the Woman's Union's work representatives will speak. Sufficient to say that this arm of our church is proving a greater power with each succeeding year.

HOSPITALS AND JAIL COMMITTEE.

MESDAMES SHARMON, SEGER AND MCKINNELL.

While our work seems to have but little variation, inasmuch as hospitals present much the same phases to visitors, yet, there are always new recruits to be seen. It was my sad experience to see our much lamented co-worker, Mrs. Garretson, among them. Little did I dream of ever seeing her there, remembering the times we had gone the "rounds" together. The St. Joseph's Hospital was her special charge, and is now undertaken by Mrs. McKinnell, while Mrs. Seger still takes charge of the County Hospital, also of a few families in that neighborhood, where she finds help and encouragement are needed. At Christmas time our society gave so generously that not only every patient was given a variety of fresh fruit, etc., but also the nurses and sisters were remembered.

THE YOUNG LADIES' ALLIANCE.

MISS HELEN ROGERS, PRESIDENT.

This is the sixth year in the life of the Alliance, and, since its organization in 1897, Mrs. Martin has been our leader and her home our place of meeting.

Our objects are mainly four: to further the interests of the First Free Church, to promote sociability, to gain a broader culture, and to foster the spirit of service.

We feel that the past year has been one of signal success in some lines, and of gain in all.

Under the head of "furthering the interests of the First Free Church," we cheerfully donated the $100.00 which was cleared from our sale of a year ago. Fifteen dollars was contributed to the Boys' club at Old Town, and in November, 1902, the sum of $50.00 was voted to the tenth anniversary fund.

Our study the past year consisted in an attempt to appreciate some of Browning's shorter poems, together with "Pippa Passes." Questions on the vital points were given out and papers read at the following meeting. During the latter part of the year Mrs. Martin gave us talks on "Cities and Art Galleries of Europe," and an exposition of the "Passion Play." Our study this year was begun last Monday evening, by an introductory talk on "Wagner's Operas." We shall take up the nine successively, Mrs. Martin giving us lecture-talks, with piano illustrations.

In sociability we feel that we have made great strides. Two parties were given in the Music Hall and numerous social gatherings were enjoyed. In the customary annual outing the usual order was reversed, the girls entertaining Mrs. Martin. Thus often thrown together, we come to know each other better, sympathizing more deeply and sharing that love which "to divide is not to take away." By an amendment to the constitution, our membership was limited to forty, and we now have thirty-seven members.

With regard to "fostering the spirit of service," we feel that we have made the greatest advance. For, have we not had

in our leader an example of untiring love and devotion? She has given us her time, her thoughts and herself. Knowing that the highest culture is an unselfish devotion to our fellow-men, we, of mortal mind, can best appreciate the "Word" when it is made "Flesh."

UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

REPORT OF PUBLICATION COMMITTEE, SAMUEL COLLYER, TREAS.

Our precious messenger of good will and fraternal greeting to those in sympathy with the aims and purposes of the First Free Church has turned its tenth milestone, and enters its eleventh volume with more cash in the treasury and more friends than ever before.

Your publication committee begs to congratulate the society upon its wisdom in arranging at the very inception of our movement for an exponent of our faith, and its uninterrupted success during all these ten years proves the wisdom of its founders. We beg, however, for a larger constituency. It is our purpose to make the present volume one of the most attractive yet issued, and it should be in every household within the membership of the Tacoma and Seattle societies. In addition to the copies sent to our regular subscribers, we are furnishing five copies to the "post office mission" and sending 60 copies to other periodicals and newspapers in exchange. Our books show a balance on hand of $76.63.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

H. H. GARRETSON, SEC'Y-TREAS.

The work for the past year has followed the usual schedule of lessons prepared expressly for us by Mr. Martin. The school shows a steady growth in permanent members. The teachers make the lessons interesting, and we are very fortunate in possessing as capable a corps of teachers as any Sunday school in the land. There are at present seven classes, with a total mem-

bership of ninety-five pupils, all of whom have signed and are acting under the following bond of union:

> To learn from the study of great human examples and great moral precepts how best to conduct our lives; to develop within our minds the free and unbiased search for truth, and in our hearts the spirit of loyalty, sympathy and unselfish service; and furthermore, to prepare ourselves for worthy membership of the First Free Church of Tacoma, we whose names are hereunto subscribed, unite as members of its Sunday School, declaring our earnest purpose to promote the interests of both the Church and its school.

We have a balance in the bank of $19.55, with all bills paid. There was received in contributions to the birthday fund, used for the purchase of new books for the library, $10.60, which, with the balance carried over from 1901, gave us $34.32, of which $32.98 has already been spent for new books.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARY.

HOWARD FEHSE, MISS N. SMYLIE, LIBRARIANS.

There are at present three hundred and thirty-five books on the shelves. Early in December there were purchased new books to the amount of $20.65, which meant an increase of twenty-five standard volumes to our library catalogue.

A large percentage of the Sunday School members take advantage of the library and regularly borrow books, and it may be said that, for the number of times the books are loaned, the older editions are in a very good condition.

During the present year it may be necessary to procure new shelves for the books, as the regular increase will no doubt fill the case, as it is expected at the next report there will be a total of 400 or 450 volumes.

THE FORTNIGHTLY CLUB.

R. E. WELCH, PRESIDENT.

This is an organization of the younger people, non-members of the First Free Church as well as members.

The two principal objects of the club are, first, the social

and intellectual advancement of its members, and, second, the furtherance of the musical interests of the First Free Church.

Pursuant to the first object, the club holds two regular meetings monthly, one of which is devoted to social entertainments and the other to educational interests. Last season Mr. Martin gave a course of illustrated lectures on "The Cities of Italy and Their Influence." This year he is delivering, under the auspices of the club, a series of illustrated lectures on "The Evolution of Italian Art."

In accordance with the second object, the club has undertaken to provide for the musical part of the Sunday services. To this end are devoted all of the funds of the club, above the running expenses, the amount at present being about $30.00 per month.

THE PANSY (SEWING) CLUB.

Mrs. T. O. Abbott.

The Pansy Club is a sewing society for girls between six and fourteen years of age connected with our Sunday School. Its object is to give them a thorough knowledge of sewing, both practical and fancy. To this end a course prepared for use in the industrial schools in New York has been adopted. It consists of tiny models showing all the different stitches and their many uses, most attractively gotten up and arranged in three volumes or courses. Each child is provided with a book in which to place her reproductions, and as the models are completed and approved they are pinned in place ready for inspection at the end of the year, and at the completion of the course to become the property of the child. The class, which last year consisted of seventeen members, meets every Saturday morning at the Tacoma Music Hall parlor for an hour and a half. The practice of giving a part of the time to recreation of some kind has been entirely abandoned, as I could not stem the tide of protest that invariably went up at having to put the work away. So now, aside from reading ten minutes to them while the more capable ones go on with their sewing, it is all work and no play.

An initiation fee of 25 cents is asked. With this income we have more than enough to pay for what materials we use, and each year have had a little surplus, and the tenth anniversary of the club we celebrate tonight by announcing ten dollars in the treasury.

The year closed, as is the custom, with a delightful party given by Mrs. Martin, when unexpected prizes were given by her to Belle Williams for the best book, Ida Brightman for the second best, and Meta Smylie for the best attendance, which was perfect, and whose book also received honorable mention.

CUSTODIAN OF THE BOOK-TABLE.

Miss A. C. Van Ruyper, A. B.

For the first time during the period of my ministrations at the book-table it has been thought necessary to furnish a report from that department, which means that the neglect under which we have heretofore languished, the books and I, is now being attoned for by attentions the most assiduous.

During the past year our book business has assumed such proportions that the curatorship of the book-table, from a sinecure's post, has become a really important activity. The present incumbent of that office feels, indeed, that the assistance of at least two secretaries and an auditor would increase the likelihood of her serving satisfactorily the crowd of customers who, during some fifteen minutes of the after-service time, swarm about her little stall in quest of catechisms, souvenir booklets, tracts, and the latest published utterances of our minister.

Besides the various souvenirs, which may be classed as timely or occasional pieces, and the numerous tracts and printed discourses, we keep regularly in stock six publications, ranging in price from ten cents to one dollar. These are the booklet entitled "Sincerity, Sympathy, Strength," compiled by Mrs. Low; "A New Catechism," by M. M. Mangasarian, and four books by Mr. Martin, "Great Thoughts," "What Life Is For," "Jesus and Other Masters" and "Not to Destroy, But to Build." Of these I have sold since the first Sunday in October about 50

copies, besides nearly 100 of Miss Abbot's catechism and more than 100 Anniversary Souvenirs, together with several hymn books. Figure to yourself, in addition, the distribution of numerous tracts, pamphlets and bulletins, and you will perhaps see why the curatorship of the book-table is for at least fifteen minutes each Sunday a not unimportant activity.

I take this occasion to celebrate the patience and amiability of the patrons who have suffered at the hands of an irritating saleswoman, who borrows their pencils and can never make change, but I also commend her to the mercy of those who come with a $5 gold piece and buy a 25-cent book.

But if the two hundred odd copies of this and that that I have sold during the past three months are, as I believe them to be, seeds bearing each within it a germ of life, and if the soil in which these are planted is, as it ought to be, rich and deep and productive and cleared of stones and weeds, why, what matters it all—the draft behind and the solicitous crowd before, the magical vanishing of pencils and a perpetual dearth of small change? No matter; your servant regards herself as the unworthy holder of an honorable though arduous post, and nothing—neither drafts nor double eagles, pencils nor pennies—shall frighten her away from it while business booms.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.

MISS LAURA TAYLOR.

Since the report of January, 1902, was submitted three new tracts, Nos. 15, 16 and 17, have been issued.

Tracts 15 and 16, with bulletins, were sent to all our non-resident members, and to the tract fund subscribers. Tract 17, entitled "A Memorable Petition," was printed for Unitarian ministers, and was sent to over two hundred of them.

As Miss Van Ruyper has taken the book-table, the secretary's funds have not been reimbursed as formerly, consequently the money on hand at the beginning of the year is exhausted, but without a deficit.

COUNCIL OF TWENTY-FIVE.

C. W. Thompson, President.

The "Council of Twenty-Five" is the latest of the auxiliary organizations connected with our church. It was formed last May, in response to Mr. Martin's suggestion, and has held monthly meetings on the first Monday of each month. The objects of the council are to promote mutual acquaintance and cooperation, to devise plans for increasing the efficiency of the various organizations of the church and for the general furtherance of its interests, reporting to the board of trustees such recommendations as the council may deem expedient.

The first efforts of the council consisted in planning and successfully carrying out an excursion on the Sound, thereby fulfilling the first of the objects for which the council exists. Next it turned its attention to increasing the number of seatholders at the Sunday theater services, and is still engaged in this work.

REPORT OF THE OLD TOWN GIRLS' CLUB.

Miss Carolyn Mason.

This organization is, so far as I know, the latest offspring of the First Free Church, but, like all the other offspring of that society, it has come in to existence with an abundance of energy, vitality and sturdy strength that is bound to carry it safely through all the infant disorders that always threaten a young institution.

During the past year (its first) the club was under the combined leadership of Mrs. Martin and Miss Fannie Allen, with Miss Anna Schlarb and Miss Jessie Mecham assisting, and with fifty names on the membership roll. Sufficient surety for its soundness, is it not?

But now, having introduced the club, let me go back and tell you how it came to be and what it really is.

A few years ago, through the instrumentality of Miss Tidmarsh, home libraries were established in a number of the homes of the poorer people of Tacoma. About three years ago these scattered libraries were consolidated into one, on South Eleventh

street, where a sewing school was opened in connection with it, under the leadership of Mrs. R. E. Frye. Here the school flourished until last winter. At that time Mrs. L G. Johnson, who had been conducting the Old Town Boys' club at her own home, left the city, thus necessitating the provision of a new place of meeting for the boys. Two eminently satisfactory rooms were found in a building on the corner of North Thirtieth and Starr streets, and as the boys would only use these rooms one evening in each week, it seemed advisable to the ladies interested in th Eleventh street school to discontinue that work and to establish in its place an Old Town Girls' Club, the intention being to establish not a sewing school alone, but a center of various activities that would interest and benefit the girls of Old Town, and would exert an educational and refining influence.

With this idea in mind, Mrs. Martin, aside from the regular sewing, gave the older girls a course of informal talks on the world's greatest paintings, illustrating her talks with tiny pictures, which, as each picture was studied, the girls pasted in albums. The girls also played games, and occasionally had an even-

The girls also played games, and occasionally had an even-
ing entertainment, for which a musical and literary program was provided. Toward the end of the year Mrs. Martin entertained the older girls at her home, where she showed them larger photographs of the pictures they had been studying, and served dainty refreshments.

At the beginning of the church year, in Mrs. Martin's absence, the Woman's Union, under Mrs. R. E. Frye, undertook to open the club with a view merely to keeping the girls together until Mrs. Martin's return, but as all of the ladies of that organization, and Mrs. Frye in particular, were deeply, not to say overwhelmingly, engrossed in special church work, it was found necessary to discontinue the meetings until after the holidays. The first meeting since Mrs. Martin's return was held last Saturday, and all indications are favorable for a highly prosperous year.

Mrs. Martin's assistants for this year are Mrs. Thomas Ripley, Miss Grace Derrickson and myself.